



The Striker Torch

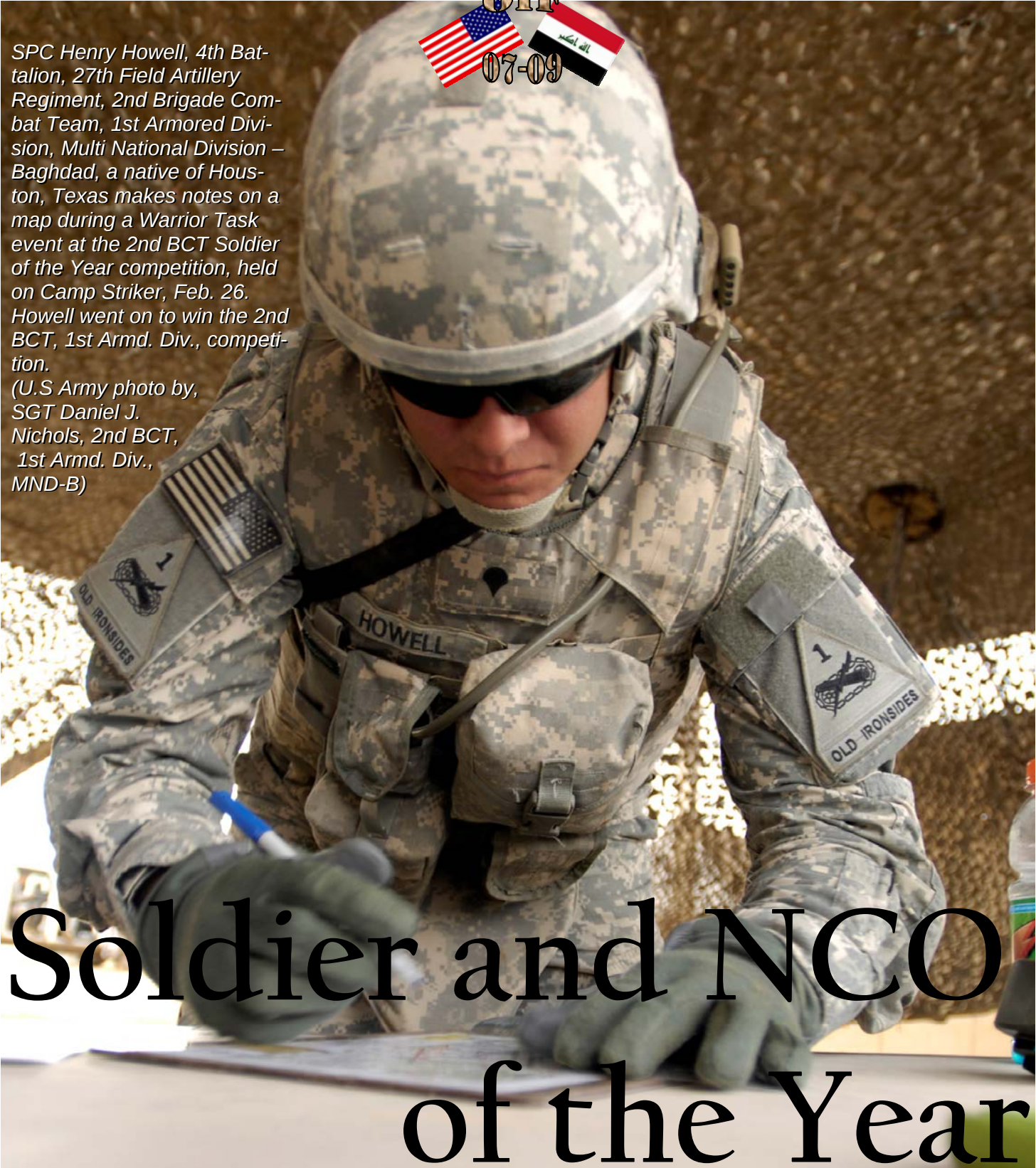
The Official Newsletter of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division

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SPC Henry Howell, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi National Division – Baghdad, a native of Houston, Texas makes notes on a map during a Warrior Task event at the 2nd BCT Soldier of the Year competition, held on Camp Striker, Feb. 26. Howell went on to win the 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., competition.

(U.S Army photo by, SGT Daniel J. Nichols, 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B)



Soldier and NCO of the Year

STRIKER 6

On Line

By COL Pat White
2nd BCT Commander



Iron Brigade Basing Adjustments

As our Brigade Combat Team has done previously during this deployment, we are in the process of making some unit basing adjustments to better account for the improved capability of the Iraqi Security Forces.

The combination of the Iraqi Security Forces-now formally in the lead under the Security Agreement- and our BCT as their security partner is under continuous assessment to ensure the right mix of forces is positioned across the operating area.

The arrival of the 1st Cavalry Division as our new Division Headquarters and the normal rotation of forces out of Theater also present the opportunity to conduct this assessment. The turnover of former U.S. bases to Iraqi Forces and the repositioning of our units is a sign of progress in our goal to provide a safe and secure environment to the Iraqi people.

This repositioning allows for a deliberate and responsible draw down that will preserve security gains, promote common goals in Iraq and continue to build the strategic partnership as established in the Security Agreement. All of these adjustments are in concert with the President's recent announcement regarding the future of forces in Iraq.

Our day to day mission that we have been conducting for ten months does not change-it is to continue to foster improved security for the Iraqi people and to improve the overall stability of Iraq. The goal of the strategic partnership between the U.S. and Iraq remains a unified, democratic and federal Iraqi that can govern, defend and sustain itself as an ally in this strategic region.

The repositioning will cause Task Force 2-6 Infantry to align with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division in the Mada'in Qada for the last months of our deployment. I assure the Family Members I will continue to provide the Gators all the support I can give them.

I am pleased to announce that Task Force 1-6 Infantry will soon return to the Iron Brigade. LTC Brian Eifler and his Soldiers have done a tremendous job in Sadr City and I am overjoyed

to see them return to the Iron Brigade.

The return is bittersweet though, as we return the Regulars to the Brigade we say good bye to 1-63 CAB deployed here from Fort Riley, Kansas. We have built a great relationship with LTC Jim Bradford, CSM Lance Lahr and the Dragon Soldiers. I demanded from my staff that we treat the Dragons just like our own - and we did. Good luck and God-speed to you Jim and to your Soldiers as you continue your OIF mission. We will always remember the Dragons as part of the Iron Brigade.

As I discussed with many of you at the Baumholder Town Hall meeting in January, our original deployment orders still reflect an early July redeployment date, but due to adjustments in the unit replacement plan we are now scheduled to return in late May/ early June 2009. This message is intended to clarify what may happen in the weeks and months to come, reduce any unnecessary rumors, and keep an open line of dialogue with our friends and families on the home-front.

As always, I will share additional information at the appropriate time. I am confident that our leaders and Soldiers in our great Brigade Combat Team will continue to operate safely day in and day out while demonstrating their ability to get things done to a high Iron Soldiers standard.



STRIKE HARD!

COL Pat White
Commander, 2BCT
"Striker 6"



STRIKER 7

On Point

By CSM Michael Eyer
2nd BCT Command Sergeant Major



Don't forget nothing!

The month of February brought many changes to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team and MND-B as a whole with the incoming Division "1st Cav." With every new unit there are many changes. However, the Iron Brigade continues to set the standard in all we do. We welcome our new headquarters and look forward to a great working relationship.

Training Iraqi Security forces remains a top priority for the Iron Brigade Soldiers. As Iraq transitions into a democratic nation, the Iron Brigade continues to strengthen the Iraqi Soldiers every day. Both our organic and attached units work hand in hand daily with their Iraqi counterparts to continue training and mentoring. Additionally, one of the many changes ongoing is the classification from U.S. only Combat Outposts to Joint Security Stations allowing Iraqi Soldiers to operate on a daily basis next to their American counterparts. This is in preparation for the eventual turn-over of more of our American bases to the Iraqi Government, successfully completing the Iron Brigade mission.

With realigning and reorganizing, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team area of operation continues to grow while maintaining the standard of the Iron Soldiers. With all the changes,

Iron Brigade Soldiers should use this time to remember the mission of the Iron Brigade.

While in transition, Soldiers from Task Force 1-35 and portions of other Task forces have begun seeing differences in both operational environment and living environment. FOB Falcon the new home for TF Knight, is equipped with a Dining Facility, hard standing CHUs (containerized housing unit), and even a full-size movie theater.



As we creep into double digits remaining, it is important that as Iron Soldiers we keep our eye focused on the mission everyday. We are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel, but do not let that force you to have tunnel vision. Al-

ways remain focused on the mission and always place safety first. Standards are instilled for a reason and it is important to maintain them as such. We still have a mission to complete.

Thank you again to the families and friends of the Brigade, your support continues to give us all strength.

STRIKE HARD!

CSM Michael Eyer
"Striker 7"



School Supplies To Jamilla

By 1LT
Devlin Winkelstein



TF 1-6 IN

Ten months ago, Task Force 1-6 Infantry took responsibility for the Southern portion of Sadr City, an area that includes one of the largest markets in Baghdad and the crowded neighborhoods of Jamilla and Thawra. One of the first experiences the Soldiers of Task Force 1-6 had on their early patrols was to be surrounded by excited children eager to make friends and hoping for a gift of some kind from the Americans. 'Mister, give me pen' was one of the most common requests heard as the kids tugged at our sleeves and pointed to the pens and pencils that were visible. Taking a moment to write a few names on scrap paper for them would draw instant applause.

In partnership with support groups in the United States, Alpha Company 'Renegades' has been able to respond directly to the needs of the children in our part of Jamilla. Since November, we have collected school supplies in preparation for a mission to one of the local schools. Girl Scout Troop 2522 and Troop 2621 of Larchmont, NY, Ameriscape INC. of Harbor Springs, MI, and the University of Michigan Geology Department are among the many friends and organizations that have sent



Handing out supplies in the Principal's Office

boxes of supplies. Six-year old Anna Brause and her friend Sophie of Larchmont, NY write, "We heard about what you were doing in Iraq. We had a bake sale in our driveway and used the money to buy these items for school children in Iraq." By the end of January, the enthusiasm and generosity of all involved resulted in over twenty boxes full of enough school supplies to support a large delivery, and on February 9th, we conducted the long-planned patrol to Al Aqbas School

Al Aqbas is a primary school for boys and girls ages 5 to 12. Close to 200 hundred students attend classes there. When we arrived in the morning, the Principal, Mrs. Gienan Dawod Salam, met us as Renegade Soldiers began carrying boxes inside from the trucks. Curious students looked around their teachers and out of their classrooms as we set up in the Principal's Office. When everything was ready, the students lined up to receive their new notebooks, pens, and pencils, trying out the few words they knew in English, shaking hands, and high-fiving with the soldiers. "It was nice to finally see a time where every child was more than excited and

A young girl holds her new notebook



sincerely wanted to be around us,” says 1LT Bradford Dooley.

We were able to give the teachers much needed items such as crayons and colored pencils for the Art teacher, chalk, scissors, erasable markers and writing paper. The Art teacher introduced us to the class artist, a young boy who could not take his eyes off of the new Art supplies. After all the students came through, there were still many things left over, which the principal explained she would use as prizes to encourage the students to do well on their exams. Before we left, all of the students gathered in the courtyard for a photo to say thank you to all of the people who had sent them the long sought after ‘pen’ and so much more. They clapped, cheered, and waved at the cameras and the Soldiers who moved among them.

The donation of school supplies to students in Jamilla will improve the relations between Sadr City residents and Coalition Forces. The pens, pencils, notebooks, and binders that are taken for granted elsewhere fill a critical shortage here in Jamilla and enhance the learning experience for its young students. While recognizing the immediate importance of these supplies, it is also important to realize that the event itself will have far reaching implications. Before we left the school, the principal brought out a young girl and explained that until today, she was afraid

of ‘the Americans.’ The principal said she knew that seeing us here had changed the girl’s mind, and the child smiled up at us standing around her and listened to the story of girls in America just her age collecting these school supplies for her and the other children. Twenty years from now, this is how she will remember America.

When we are able to help out in areas of daily life like school, it increases the good will of the population towards Coalition Forces, making us safer and opening doors that might otherwise have remained closed. The better our relationship with the leaders and people of Jamilla, the better we are able to focus our efforts and respond to their needs on a broader level. With this firmly in mind, Alpha Company is moving forward with an array of projects to improve quality of life in Jamilla. Many of these projects are supported directly by friends, family, service groups, and other organizations from the United States, including soccer ball and toy drives. While the road paving and construction projects we do often take weeks or months, the generosity of the Home Front helps us make a difference day to day. It is by these small steps that we will leave Jamilla better off than when we arrived and better prepared to sustain the peace when we are gone.



Students gather in the school courtyard to say thank you.



Rebuilding The Mada'in

By SSG
Alan Caldwell



TF 2-6 IN

Over the past two months, the soldiers of Task Force Gator have put much effort into a massive re-building effort in the Salman Pak area. The operation, known as "Iron Gator", has infused several million dollars worth of Commander's Emergency Relief Fund dollars into several projects that will help with the improvement of essential services and quality of life for the residents of the Mada'in.

The genesis of the program was to demonstrate to the people of the area the benefits possible when you participate in the reconciliation process. The initial proposals began in December of 2008 with the identification of several potential projects in the area. The task force civil-military operations team worked closely with the local Nahia council and the director generals from various ministries to narrow the list to those projects that would bring the most benefit. Addition-

ally, projects had to be sustainable by the GoI into the future. The three critical areas identified were education, irrigation, and electricity.

For irrigation, the focus was on ensuring water could fill the canals in the local areas. The task force executed an expansion of the Al Bawi water canal. This project will restore crop production capabilities to farms that have suffered from a lack of water since the onset of the war in Iraq. The canal is a critical source of the water grid for farmers all the way to Wahida and Nahrwan. By completing the project, all four of the pumps at the station will be able to run simultaneously, increasing the cubic capacity of the water flow. Additionally, a lack of electricity meant irregular water flow in the bread-basket area from Khanasa to Al Lej. The task force is in the process of supervising the construction of several self-sustaining



The grand opening of the refurbished Saad High School. From left to right, Mr. Khadem Attia, Salman Pak Nahia Council Chairman, MAJ Jason Joose, TF 2-6 IN DCO, Ali Mahmoud, Salman Pak Ministry of Education Representative, and LTC Karim, Commander of 1/45th IA BN.



windmills that will operate independently of the power grid and will keep the water flowing from the Tigris into the canals. This project is being used as a model for other parts of Iraq.

In the educational arena, Iron Gator funds are improving the infrastructure at the two major schools in the Salman Pak area, the Saad Boys High School and the Mada'in High School. Each school has approximately 700 students. The buildings received extensive structural and cosmetic repair. Additionally, furniture and school supplies were included as part of the final work. The electrical infrastructure in Iraq has suffered a great deal since the war began and the task force used Iron Gator as an opportunity to improve reliability. Several electrical sub-stations in the Mada'in were furnished with new power transformers from the Government of Iraq, however the oil required to run these machines was not included. With Iron Gator funding, the task force is purchasing the special oil to

get the transformers operational. This effort should increase the quantity and sustainability of the electricity provided to the population of the Mada'in by the Government of Iraq. Additionally, several high voltage KV lines will be run from the main transformer to several areas, to include the Salman Pak Hospital. This KV line will ensure a steadier flow of power for this critical health care facility.

Throughout this entire process, the soldiers of Task Force Gator have conducted hundreds of combat patrols supporting this effort. We have worked closely with local leaders to ensure reconstruction efforts address relevant issues throughout the deployment. Operation Iron Gator provided the task force an opportunity to undertake projects to improve the quality of life of the population, improve the conditions for reconciliation, and solidify the relationship between the Iraqi people, Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition Forces.



MAJ Jason Joose, TF 2-6 IN DCO (far right), CPT Steve Griffin, TF 2-6 IN S5 (center) and Engineer Ahmran, DG of Water Resources, at the Bawi Canal Expansion ground breaking ceremony in January of 2008.



Iron Knights Moves, but



By CPT

Kellen Blythe

Jisr Diyala Stays Strong^{TF 1-35 AR}

The Jisr Diyala Nahia Council has become a far more self reliant civil government then expected only a year ago. As TF Knight moves closer to Baghdad and away from Jisr Diyala, the city must take on more independence. Confident that the citizens on the Council will succeed, TF Knight leaves the Nahia in capable hands.

As security continues to improve throughout Iraq, local governments grow to become capable and efficient civic organizations. In the city of Jisr Diyala, this is precisely the case. In May of 2008, when TF Knight first met the members of the city government or Nahia Council, they were timid and inexperienced. The local government was an infant of an organization. The leaders were citizens that volunteered to take on civil service. Few were experienced or had held public office in the past. Yet they were all bound by the common desire to improve the lives of the people in the Jisr Diyala Nahia.

Over the last year, they have become bold and proactive in the governance of their city. This desire to improve

Sayeed Salam Badin and Fadil Mutlik



the quality of life in their Nahia was evident when the Council scheduled, prepared and conducted a Development conference designed to bring much needed improvements to the people. High level members of the Government of Iraq attended, including various ministries capable of providing improved essential services. From that point on the Council began to take a more proactive role in providing essential services. Projects such as constructing pipe-lines from a water treatment facility to the city of Jisr Diyala, among others, became top priority.

Over time less influence from TF Knight was required to help the government find its place in Jisr Diyala. The members of the Council showed a strong desire to understand the needs of the people in the area and to help provide them with needed services. Members of the Council began to attend local community meetings to gain much needed feedback from the local citizens and leaders.

TF Knight was chosen to assume a specific area of Baghdad during a vital adjustment of units during the drawdown after the "surge." With security gains accomplished by the partnership between the Soldiers of TF Knight and the local 3rd Battalion 1st Iraqi National Police and a confident Nahia Council, Jisr Diyala has only an encouraging future. With TF Knight moving on to other missions, the people of Jisr Diyala have an able civil government.



Local Stimulus

By CPT

Justin Watson



TF 4-27 FA

In the informal surroundings of the COP Meade "Oasis" Tea Shop, three local women just opening, or in the early stages of running their own businesses, were aided in their journey to economic self-sufficiency by Task Force Thunder Feb. 6.

MAJ Eric Savickas, executive officer, TF 4-27, personally paid out the equivalent of over \$3,000 U.S. dollars, which is roughly equal to \$1 million Iraqi Dinar, to three women whose businesses, after a rigorous vetting process, were deemed of special value to the economic and social stability of the local community.

"It is a great favor the Americans do for us," said one of the women, who asked to remain anonymous. "We are willing to work, but with the country still recovering from all the upheaval, we sometimes lack the money to get going."

That afternoon the Civil Affairs Team traveled to Alpha Battery's Operational Environment. There they met with two of the battery's platoons in order to pay key small businesses micro grants the soldiers had been working hard to identify over the last several weeks.

When the Civil Affairs Team arrived at the headquarters of 4th Company, 3rd Battalion of the 31st Iraqi Army Brigade, 1st Lieutenants John Furr and John Stamper along with Sergeant First Class Eugene Broadus were already sitting with 1LT Kasem, the executive officer of 4th Company 3/31st IA, discussing the improvements in the security and prosperity of the region.

SPC Humaun Dawood, of Ebonsville, Texas, explains the terms of a microgrant to the owner of Khalid's Grocery Store in OE Attack



"When the businesses, small locally owned businesses, start to flourish, it gives the people a sense of economic hope and well being. People with hope do not cooperate with Al Qaeda," said Kasem.

On their way back to COP Meade, the Civil Affairs Team and Alpha Battery Elements stopped by a burgeoning grocery store to pay the final micro-grant of the day.

Two days later the Civil Affairs Team linked up with Alpha Battery again, this time to bolster the agricultural segment of OE Attack's economy. Five local farmers received smaller micro-grants for tools and upkeep valued at \$1200 (U.S.). SSG Christopher Gleason, the pay agent for TF 4-27, was impressed by the visible difference in local attitude during the payouts as compared with his previous tours in Iraq.

"I don't think this would've done much good the last time I was here, but now, with the security situation so stable, these grants are like a finishing touch to help these people onto their own two feet. It's like a combat-zone version of the stimulus package," said Gleason.

To date, Task Force Thunder has paid nearly \$100,000 U.S. dollars in small grants to local businesses. Though determining prime causes in a situation as complex as the one in Iraq is always difficult, it is safe to say that both Gleason and Kasem have made very good points.

With these grants, small town entrepreneurs are able to not only put food on their families' tables, but also to create an environment of normalcy, of peaceful economic activity in sharp contrast to the bloody conflagration through which their nation has passed in recent years.

The money is more than just a handout; it's a down payment on the secure and democratic future for which many Iron Thunder Soldiers, alongside their Iraqi partners, have fought and bled these last six years.



Iraqi Army:



40 EN

By 1LT
Michael Hall

Route Clearance

You may have noticed something different about Route Clearance in the past month. Since the beginning of December, Route Clearance Platoon, 1st Company Engineers, 9th Iraqi Army Division has led the way for route clearance. The Iraqi Route Clearance Platoon has been conducting missions with 3rd Platoon, Bravo Company, 40th Engineer Battalion. The joint missions are led by Iraqi Lieutenant Mushtak and his platoon. The Iraqi Army uses different equipment than the Americans, but the mission remains the same: to keep the roads of Iraq clear of roadside bombs and to keep Iraqis safe.

The Route Clearance Platoon, 1st Company Engineers and 3rd Platoon, Bravo Company began joint training in November 2008 at in Baghdad. The two

platoons trained on first aid, ordnance identification, road side bomb investigation techniques, and joint simulated IED lanes so that the Iraqi and American platoons could get used to working with each other. After two weeks of intensive training, the platoons put their training to the test and began joint route clearance missions in Mada'in.

The 1st Company Route Clearance Platoon leads the patrol taking most of the responsibility for finding and interrogating possible IEDs. Interrogating IEDs is a dangerous and tough job, but 1st Company Route Clearance Platoon handles it with great skill. Their Badger bomb-clearance vehicle is used for interrogation and detection of IEDs while their HMMWVs provide additional security. The Badger is a mine-resistant vehicle that has an arm with a camera used for interrogating IEDs. After each mission both platoons conduct detailed reviews of the patrol to discuss how the mission was executed. Each session provides valuable feedback to the platoon leaders that they integrate into future missions.

The Iraqi Army Route Clearance Platoon will take over more responsibility in Mada'in over the coming months. They will be working with other platoons from Bravo Company to get a broader experience in working with the US Army and hope learn new techniques from the other platoons as they conduct more missions securing the roads of Mada'in.

Troops from the Route Clearance Platoon, 1st Company Engineers, 9th Iraqi Army Division participate in classroom instruction with B Company, 40th Engineer Battalion.



Keep a step ahead

With SIGINT

By SFC
Joshua Fouts



40 EN

The necessity of producing good intelligence is apparent and need not be further urged. All that remains for me to add is that you keep the whole matter secret as possible. For upon secrecy, success depends in most enterprises of the kind and for want of it, they are generally defeated.

~George Washington in a letter to
Colonel Elias Dayton, 26 July 1777

Throughout history, the leaders of nations and armies have sought to be forewarned of dangers and forearmed with information that reduces uncertainty and provides a critical edge for decisions. The effort to meet these fundamental needs of decision makers is what lies behind the practice of intelligence. That practice consists to keep secret the activities, capabilities, and plans of foreign powers or organizations.

Today, intelligence is a vital element in every substantial international activity of the US government. Every day, the agencies and offices that make up the US intelligence community provide an important information advantage to those who manage the nation's strategic interests-political, economic and military. Intelligence organizations support a broad range of consumers, from the national level of the President, the Cabinet and the Congress, to the tactical level of military forces deployed in Iraq.

Throughout history, success has depended upon timely and accurate infor-

mation. In essence, "information is power". However, lack of information is rarely the reason for warning failure and consequent surprise. Instead, failure, at times, results from how we perceive and process information, and the organizational disconnects that limit the distribution of information.

Intelligence analysts operate in a minefield of variable information, ranging from mere rumor to planted disinformation, to the occasional nugget of verifiable fact. "Connecting the dots" is therefore not the proper concept to use to highlight an alleged "intelligence failure." What the intelligence community failed to prevent during 9/11 was closer to putting together the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. What made assembling the pieces that much harder is that a picture of the finished puzzle was not available. What was missing was the big-picture threat the US faced.

Like all other times of crisis that the US has faced, the Global War on Terrorism changed the cooperation between different agency organizations and had significant impact on Signals Intelligence activities in the years that followed. It demonstrated that SIGINT could significantly change the course of history, saving American lives in the process.

Today, SIGINT continues to play an important role in keeping the United States a step ahead of its enemies.



Return to Normalcy

By LTC

Anne Resty

Women's Initiatives



47 FSB

The goal of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team Women's Initiative program is to support and develop women in the areas of literacy, economics, health, and to support the widow population. The desired goal is to establish a women's family center in each Nahiya. Ideally, these centers will support programs for literacy, legal support, health education, grant and loan applications, family education, and more.

A successful program is the funding and opening of sewing centers. An example is Salam's Sewing Shop, which opened in November 2008. The shop employs 12 local women, nine of whom are widows. Ten of the women will work as seamstresses and the remaining two will work on home crafts, needlework, crochet, embroidery, stitching, and knitting. In the Mahmudiyah area, there are currently nine sewing shops that are tracked for effectiveness by coalition forces. Recently funded in February 2009 is a Sewing and Beauty Center. The training center will be able to train 1,000 to 1,500 women per year in marketable skills.

Another very successful aspect of the initiative has been the Women's Bazaar. This initiative allows the women to bring products onto the combat outposts and sell these items to the Soldiers. Rugs, shawls, crafts, and clothing are the best-selling handmade items. The women gain confidence through bartering and selling, and the money they make is capital investment for further production of items to be sold at local markets.

In the Mada'in qada, a Women's Mobile Health Clinic was created, which travels to rural areas where health care is not readily accessible. The healthcare



team consists of an Iraqi female physician, a nurse, and an assistant who together deliver health care and education to women and children in the area.

Finally, Administrative Committees for women have been created. These committees give women a venue to voice their concerns, to discuss issues affecting women, and to network among other influential women in the community. Each Nahiya has a committee, which is composed of seven women. Each group meets monthly with the other committees in the Qada. In these meetings, the women prioritize projects and concerns and submit them to governmental authorities, non-governmental organizations, or coalition forces.

Iraqi women face many cultural barriers in their quest to better themselves and their families. With the help of coalition forces and the embedded provincial reconstruction teams, they are slowly but surely progressing to a better life.



Death Dealers

By 1LT

Francis De Rosa

Secure Arba'een



1-63CAB

For the Death Dealers and their partners in the 2nd Battalion of the 25th Brigade 17th Division Iraq Army, the major operation of the month (and one of the most important of the year) was securing the massive movement of Shi'a pilgrims through Mahmudiyah. The pilgrims were observing the religious holiday Arba'een, trekking south 80 miles from Baghdad to Karabala. The route of the pilgrimage brought them down Route Jackson, directly past the front gates of Forward Operating Base Mahmudiyah. In the past, this event has been exploited by some extremists to harm the pilgrims, and provided an opportunity for others to infiltrate nefarious characters into the areas along the pilgrimage route.

To provide some context for the event, it is worth examining the significance of the holiday. The word Arba'een is Arabic for forty. Arba'een follows forty days after the feast of Ashura. Both Arba'een and Ashura commemorate the death of the Imam Hussein who perished along with his 72 followers fighting an enemy force of hundreds of thousands in the Battle of Karbala. In the recent history of Iraq, observance of the Arba'een holiday was banned by Saddam Hussein. This year was the seventh observance of the holiday since it was resumed in 2003, after the liberation of Iraq.

For the first phase of the operation, the Dealers helped 2nd Battalion with preparatory operations. Preparations consisted of emplacing Iraqi Army ambush

and sniper locations to prevent mortar attacks on the pilgrims as well as preparing the checkpoints along the route. Dealer platoons inspected the Iraqi Army emplacements and ensured that all the checkpoints along the route were adequately supplied and arranged. In regards to the preparations, SFC Shane Perret said, "the security operation went well." The only minor difficulty faced during this phase of the operation was the harassment from local children. According to SGT Scott Grey, "there were kids everywhere yelling, 'mister, football.'"

Once preparations were completed, the Dealers began a 96-hour operation to reinforce 2nd Battalion's security operations. Although Arba'een traffic began a few days prior, the Dealers reinforced the Iraqi Army during the heaviest days of pedestrian traffic. Platoons patrolled in the areas nearby the route that could be used by extremists to conduct mortar or rocket attacks. Because of their constant presence and partnership with the IA, no mortar or rocket attacks occurred in Dealer's area of operation.

For closing thoughts, it is perhaps best to get an Iraqi's perspective. According to KJ, a Dealer interpreter, "Arba'een is good because the people walking get worn out and get stress out so they are too tired to fight. It makes peace. It is good they are doing a good thing for religion and not fighting."



Iron Brigade Soldiers hone combat skills while deployed for

SGT Justin Santana, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi National Division – Baghdad, a native of the Bronx, N.Y., performs maintenance on the Brown-ing M2 .50 Caliber Heavy-Barrel Machine-Gun as part of the 2nd BCT Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year competition, held on Camp Striker, Feb. 26. Santana went on to win the 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., competition. (U.S Army photo by, SGT Daniel J. Nichols, 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B)

Soldier and NCO of the Year

*By SGT
Daniel Nichols*



(LEFT) COL Pat White, commander, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi National Division – Baghdad, pins an Army Commendation Medal on SPC Henry Howell, 4-27 FA, 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B, a native of Houston, Texas, at the 2nd BCT Soldier of the Year Competition awards ceremony, directly after Howell was announced as 2nd BCT Soldier of the Year, Feb. 28. (U.S Army photo by, SGT Daniel J. Nichols, 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B)

Early morning, Feb. 26, 11 Soldiers from the battalions of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi National Division – Baghdad, gathered outside brigade headquarters at Camp Striker, Iraq for the beginning of the annual Iron Brigade Soldier and Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year competition.

For three days these outstanding Soldiers competed against one another, being tested in many areas of professionalism including physical fitness, Warrior Tasks, a timed road march, rifle marksmanship, and a board covering a wide

spectrum of Army knowledge.

In the end, one Soldier and one NCO were selected as the winners of the competition.

Both Soldiers were from 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B.

“The chain of command definitely backed us up 100%, they gave us the time we needed, and designated the resources we needed to prepare,” said SGT Justin Santana, 4-27 FA, 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B, a native of the Bronx, N.Y., who won the brigade NCO of the Year competition.

The Soldier of the Year also agreed that their unit helped tremendously in getting them prepared for the competition.

"Our unit, and the first sergeant especially, got behind us and made sure we had the time and training we needed, and it definitely paid off," said SPC Henry Howell, 4-27 FA, 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B, a native of Houston, Texas, who won the brigade Soldier of the Year competition.

The awards ceremony was held Feb. 28, at the Camp Striker Dining Facility where the competitors and the leadership of their units were present for the announcement of the winners and runner-ups of the competition.

Despite the fierce competition Santana and Howell were announced as the winners and received Army Commendation Medals, a four day pass, and a gift certificate from Army and Air Force Exchange Service.

The runner-ups announced were SPC Greg Gordon, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry, 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B, and SGT Amar Arias, 47th Field Support Battalion, 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B, who received Army Achievement Medals along with a four day pass.

"These guys had to work extra hard to prepare for this mission," said CSM Michael Eyer, command sergeant major of 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B, of Houston, Texas, while speaking of the competitors. "Their units had to help them along the way as well and what I saw during this competition was awesome. Their knowledge, their enthusiasm, and their morale was exactly what I wanted to see."

Although only two Soldiers were able to walk away with the titles of Brigade Soldier and NCO of the Year, every competitor represented their units with excellence.

"The Soldiers that showed up were very capable individuals," said Eyer.

"Every time I run a competition like this I have surprises, and this one was no exception. The Soldiers' ability and knowledge was above and beyond what I expected."

"There was good competition out there," said Howell. "There were some people who had us wondering where we stood [in the competition]."

In order to properly prepare, each Soldier who competed put in extra training time for the competition. Although the competition was over, the lasting effects of the experience on the competitors were something they all planned to take back to their units.

"It's made me realize how important training is," said Satana. "I'm definitely going to take all the knowledge I've gained in these past three days and take it back to my Soldiers."

"It's been some of the best training that I've had since I've been in the Army," said Howell "I'm in the best shape I've ever been in, physically and mentally."

Although Soldier and NCO of the year competitions are an annual event for all Army units, the extra effort involved in such an event while deployed effected both those who put together, and competed in the event.

"Even though we're in a war zone, and we're busy, very busy, we should take time to conduct these kinds of competitions to allow our Soldiers the opportunity to see how good they really are and to go up against fellow Soldiers," said Eyer. "The rest of the Army doing it, those who aren't deployed, and if we are not doing it then we're neglecting the Soldiers needs, especially when it comes to competitions and trying to stand above everybody else in their organization."

"The fact that you can take time out while we're fighting a war, prep for this, and to come up here and have your leaders support you to be able to do this really



makes me proud,” said COL Pat White, from Apple Valley, Calif., commander of 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B, during the awards ceremony.

Soldiers across the Army are able to compete in monthly, quarterly and yearly boards and competitions within their companies and battalions before competing at the brigade level. After the experience of the brigade competition, both Santana and Howell encourage other Soldiers who may consider competing in similar events to do so.

“Just train hard, don’t ever doubt yourself,” Santana said.

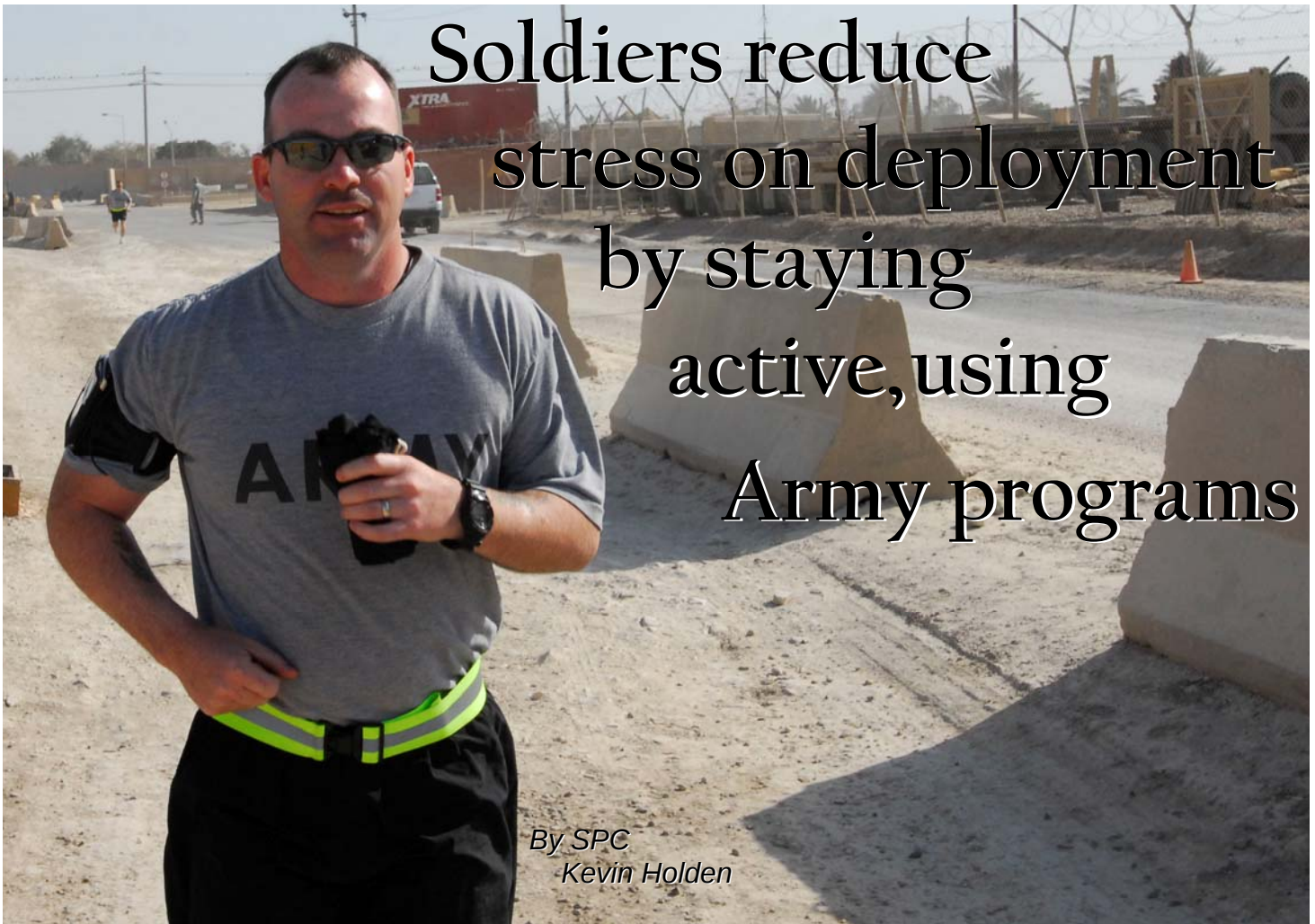
“Give 110%, because you never know, you could come back at the end and blow them away, take the training to heart and use it,” said Howell.

Editors note: Although Howell competed as a Specialist in the competition and received the title of Soldier of the Year, his motivation and competitive spirit assisted him along the way to being promoted to the rank of Sergeant which occurred on March 1, 2009.



COL Pat White, commander, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi National Division – Baghdad, pins an Army Commendation Medal on SGT Justin Santana, 4-27 FA, 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B, a native of the Bronx, N.Y., at the 2nd BCT Soldier of the Year Competition awards ceremony, directly after Santana was announced as 2nd BCT Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year, Feb. 28. (U.S Army photo by, SGT Daniel J. Nichols, 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div.)

Soldiers reduce stress on deployment by staying active, using Army programs



By SPC
Kevin Holden

SSG Marcus Hooks, of Kingston Tenn., who is serves with Maintenance Support Team, 2nd Battalion 6th Infantry, Task Force Gator, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad, goes running on Camp Striker and will meet the MST section at the north gym to keep physically fit and relieve stress while on his scheduled fifteen month deployment. (U.S. Army Photo by SPC Kevin Holden, 2nd BCT PAO, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B)

Deployment is never easy, especially a fifteen-month deployment where Soldiers face the possibility of missing the same holiday twice away from their loved ones.

This undisputed fact has been the reality of Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad, since they arrived in Iraq in April 2008, the brigade's third deployment in OIF since 2003.

Now, almost 11 months later, Iron Brigade Soldiers continue their work in Iraq despite the hardships of being away from family, friends, loved ones, and the

comforts of home for the duration of their mission.

"Deployment to a combat zone, working seven days a week for fifteen months can be a [tiring] assignment to anyone no matter what their job is," said SPC Mathew Fischer, a Soldier from Company B, 47th Forward Support Battalion, 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B, who is based on Camp Striker, near Baghdad.

Fischer's military occupational specialty is 94F, a job that consists of repairing night vision systems, computers, and global positioning equipment. His job requires him to work long hours while



repairing equipment sent in from various Soldiers within his unit.

"I received my first assignment orders in the Army for Baumholder, Germany, at the end of Advanced Individual Training and have been keeping in touch with family and friends using the internet and telephones since I arrived in Germany," said Fischer. "Continuing to communicate with family using the internet has been a great way for me to relieve stress while being deployed in Iraq," he said.

However, many combat support Soldiers, unlike Fischer, are not able to perform their assigned jobs while deployed. Many Iron Brigade Soldiers who were once fuelers, cooks, or mechanics now find themselves serving as gunners on supply convoys or in other new jobs in order to meet mission requirements.

For many Soldiers, this often leads them to positions that require them to quickly adapt to a new job, and learn different skills.

"Going to ranges and learning to use a 240B machine gun to qualify from the turret of an MRAP (Mine Resistant Ambush Protected-vehicle) was challenging," said SPC James Ott, of Oscala Fla., a mechanic from Service Battery 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery, 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B. "The only weapons I fired prior to deployment were my M4 rifle and a 249 SAW."

"The most difficult thing is not getting complacent after multiple missions and staying focused," said Ott.

During any deployment working in a stressful environment can affect an individual's work performance. In order to make it through, Soldiers have come to terms on how

SPC James Ott, of Oscala Fla., who serves with Service Battery, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi-National Division- Baghdad, conducts his personal combat checks on his 240B machine gun in his Mine Resistant Ambush Protected- vehicle (MRAP) before leaving on a combat patrol mission. Ott fights complacency and stress by staying focused on his mission while on his scheduled fifteen month deployment. (U.S. Army Photo by Spc. Kevin Holden, 2nd BCT PAO, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B)



to deal with deployment stress through different activities and programs, and finding what works for them.

"I release my Soldiers to PT, exercise in the gym, and go running when job orders are completed," said SSG Marcus Hooks, a native of Kingston, Tenn. with the Maintenance Support Team of 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B.

Hooks has served in the Army for 12 years as a 63H, a track vehicle repairer, and has been on multiple deployments. He supervises his MST and ensures they have enough time away from work, without effecting unit maintenance needs.

"Giving my Soldiers time away from the motor pool helps morale and keeps them physically fit," said Hooks. "As a mechanic there are no regular duty hours, and our job depends on the workload."

Besides working out, another source available to Soldiers when dealing with stress is their unit Chaplain. Soldiers can seek advice and receive assistance with personal issues outside their chain of command.

"Soldiers are grateful, and have a sense that someone is taking interest in their concerns and working to resolve their issues," Chaplain (CPT) Charles Lahmon, the Chaplain for 47th FSB, 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B., a native Mt. Vernon, Ohio, said while talking about Soldiers that have come to talk with him about their problems.

The Chaplain also acts as a resource for leaders to seek advice on how to take care of their Soldiers that may not want to seek outside assistance.

"NCOs have asked for guidance from me to help their Soldiers with personal issues," said Chaplain Lahmon.

The Army also provides medical officers and staff that specialize in mental health to help diagnose Soldiers with symptoms of depression and give medical treatment. CPT Michelle Kline, Ph.D., a

mental health officer with Company C, 47th FSB, 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B., provides initial counseling for Soldiers seeking assistance.

"The medical staff provides an environment to deal with the stress of deployment for all Soldiers. The medical care received is confidential and available for walk-in appointments," said Kline, a native of Ephrata, Pa.

For Iron Brigade Soldiers who are not located on Camp Striker, Kline and the mental health clinic go on the road to visit Soldiers located in other areas.

"We make monthly visits to all command observation posts where our Soldiers are located," said Kline.

These regularly scheduled visits allow Soldiers to receive mental health assistance regardless of the area of Iraq in which they serve.

"Part of our mission is to bring mental health to the soldiers in order to keep the mission going and also to provide the soldiers the support they need," said Kline. "In order to provide soldiers the best and most available care that we can, we go to them."

Serving in the U.S. Army requires personal sacrifices and every one of the Iron Brigade Soldiers have made personal sacrifices during the deployment.

The Iron Brigade leadership is taking a proactive approach to combat stress and using preventive measures and encouraging early intervention through a wide variety of available assistance.

The Iron Brigade will provide a comprehensive screening mechanism to identify Soldiers who may need assistance upon redeployment. For more information visit the Chaplain or the combat stress control team.

Leaders regularly remind Soldiers that seeking medical assistance from a mental health care provider is not a career ender. Seeking help early is the best way to avoid long term problems.



Women's Bazaar helps Local Iraqi families



By SPC
Jamie Vernon

Soldiers from Task Force 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment buy from a vendor during the Women's Bazaar at FOB Mahmudiya Feb 17. The Women's Bazaar allowed the local women to improve their small businesses and take care of their families. Originally organized by the Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team and the Women's Initiative program, this is the second bazaar held on the base south of Baghdad.

Women of the Mahmudiyah Qada filled tables with homemade products and Iraqi souvenirs during a special bazaar on Forward Operation Base Mahmudiyah, south of Baghdad, Feb 17.

Sponsored by Soldiers of Task Force 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, the innovative event gave troops stationed on the southern base the opportunity to purchase items

and assist neighboring Iraqi families at the same time.

"This is a great way for local women to improve their small businesses and take care of their families," said CPT Sara Woods, with the 445th Civil Affairs Battalion, from Janesville, Minn. "It also allows our Soldiers to purchase authentic Iraqi souvenirs and gifts."

Many of the women in the

Mahmudiyah area lost their husbands to insurgent violence and struggle to provide for their families; making them easy targets for insurgents. The bazaar served as a way to show them they can create a better future for their families.

"This is a good project that is helping widows and people who need the money. I am so happy to be a part of it," said Madiha Gumar, one of the small business owners, and a member of the Mahmudiyah Women's Group.

This is the second bazaar Soldiers of TF 1-63 CAB have had the opportunity to be involved with and was much larger and had more participants than the first. Those who took part in the bazaar felt, not only they were walking away with something to take home, but also giving back to the local Iraqi community.

"It was very beneficial in what we're trying to do for Iraq. From a personal stand point it was really gratifying to know we were helping the widows and their children," said Dale Hamilton, a civilian law enforcement professional attached to TF 1-63 CAB.

Although the bazaar was considered a success at the end of the day, it also presented a foundation for each woman present to continue and expand her business.

"They came in and they sold these products to the Soldiers, and I think each one of them walked out with a couple hundred dollars," said LTC Anne Resty, a Women's Initiative coordinator from Clarinda, Iowa. "So now afterwards they can buy more fabric and other materials to make more products that they can sell in the local markets as well."

The event also helped to increase the good relationship between the people



A local Iraqi woman from the Mahmudiyah Qada stands by her table of merchandise with her son during the Women's Bazaar hosted by Task Force 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment at FOB Mahmudiyah, Feb 17. Homemade products and Iraqi souvenirs were arranged at the bazaar for sale to the Soldiers of TF 1-63. The unique program started through a partnership between MND-B units, Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams and the Women's Initiative program.

of Mahmudiyah and the MND-B Soldiers stationed on FOB Mahmudiyah.

"The more they see us as helpful Americans and they get to know us, they get to know that we have children, they get to know that we have spouses, and they get to know that we're just normal people...and the benefits are multi-faceted," said Resty. "They're going to think of us as normal people and that we can help them."

Iron Brigade hosts Black History Month luncheon



By SGT
Daniel Nichols

Soldiers of the Camp Striker Choir perform a traditional version of the gospel song "Down by the Riverside" during the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division's Black History Month observance luncheon in the VIP room of the Camp Striker dining facility, Feb. 24.

"Iron Brigade" Soldiers from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, hosted a Black History Month observance luncheon in the Camp Striker dining facility, Feb. 24.

The luncheon included live performances from the Camp Striker Choir and Gospel Praise Dance Team along with presentations detailing the lives of important African-American figures in American history.

"There are a lot of things that we've accomplished over the years," said 1SG Leon Brown II, of Milpitas, Calif., the luncheon's guest speaker. "Barack Obama being the first black president is a huge accomplishment, but in that accomplishment let us not forget those that have come before us."

The luncheon attendees included a wide mixture of Soldiers from different ethnicities and backgrounds; similar to the Army's makeup.

"This theme of strength in diversity is absolutely true in the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, and we always emphasize that in the team," said LTC Jason Kirk, of Shreveport, La., the brigade's executive officer.

Although today's equal opportunity situation for minority groups is far better than it was many years ago, Black History Month provides one way for people to remember how far America, and the Army, has come.

"I believe it is important for us as African-Americans to actually embrace our history and embrace our culture," said Brown. "But I believe it is also important for us not to exclude other ethnicities and other minorities, because although African-Americans have really done a lot in this country and have fought and bled, there are others who have done the same."

Black History Month is just one of many other monthly cultural events that Iron Brigade Soldiers observe, even while deployed to Iraq.

Jisr Diyala merchants get

By PFC
Evan Loyd

Microgrants from “Iron Soldiers”

Seven business owners in the Jisr Diyala area received a \$500 micro grant from the Commanders Emergency Relief Program to improve their businesses after a rigorous application process held by the Iraqi National Police and Multi-National Division—Baghdad Soldiers Feb. 12.

Since April of 2008, Task Force 1-35 Armor has given numerous micro grants to jump start and continue economical growth in local Iraqi communities.

“These micro grants are an opportunity for (Task Force) 1-35 to invest in the long term stability of the region’s economy,” said CPT Andy Besser, from Raleigh, N.C., the civil military operations officer of Task Force 1-35 Armor.

These seven latest business owners to receive micro grants began their journey in December 2008 at a micro grant fair where officers of 3rd Brigade, 1st National Police and their partners, 1st Battalion, 6th

Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, first met, interviewed and recorded their businesses.

“We were looking for established credible businesses that could use the micro grant to grow and develop,” said Besser.

From those interviews a list of 50 possible businesses was created. Throughout the next two months both the Soldiers and the NP officers assessed the business through on-site inspections and further interviews.

“I have been involved in many micro grant operations and every time I do them I see so many people that use these grants in the best way,” said SSG Thomas Keller, of Blackfoot, Idaho. “This is not a charity, we expect a lot from them and for the most part, they deliver.”

The micro grants are not paid just in money though. Iraqi NP officers and MND-B Soldiers try to match local business owners and vendors to keep the supply-and-demand wheel within the nearby communities.

“We try to keep the money in the area to further help the economy,” said Besser. “We get them what they need to increase, repair and produce new jobs.”

These micro grants are just another step in the ongoing mission to decrease violence and encourage the people of the Jisr Diyala Nahia to improve their livelihood, explained SGT William Reese, of Novinger, Mo.

“The micro grant initiative has been very successful and has been met with a lot of enthusiasm from the local population. It has been a very effective non-kinetic means to encourage support from the population.”



1LT Thomas Woodard (right), from Albuquerque, N.M., executive officer of Company B, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, pays the first payment of a micro grant to a local business owner at the Jisr Diyala Nahia building Feb. 12.. A joint Iraqi National Police and Coalition Forces panel selected individual merchants after a rigorous application process.

Mahmudiyah children receive Wheelchairs from “Iron Brigade”



By CPT
Sara Woods

Haneen, a 12-year-old disabled Iraqi girl, shows her happiness with her new wheelchair Feb. 7. Haneen was one of three Iraqi children in Mahmudiyah to receive wheelchairs donated by Wheelchairs for Iraqi Kids. Civil Affairs Team 31 assigned to 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, partnered with Brad Blauser, founder of Wheelchairs for Iraqi Kids, to have the pediatric wheelchairs delivered to the children.

Multi-National Division—Baghdad Soldiers of the “Iron Brigade” teamed up with an American charity to change the lives of three disabled Iraqi children from the Mahmudiyah Qada Feb. 7.

Civil Affairs Team 31 of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, partnered with Brad Blauser, founder of Wheelchairs for Iraqi Kids, to have the pediatric wheelchairs delivered to the children.

Blauser started the organization in 2005 after a trip to Mosul, Iraq. He offered to help the battalion surgeon in ob-

taining wheelchairs for the children. The wheelchair, designed by a company in Bozeman, Mont. specifically for rough terrain, started with a donated design from college engineering students. Each chair costs approximately \$350 and is funded entirely through donations. The U.S. Government ships the wheelchairs to Blauser overseas for free.

“Since then [2005] we’ve given out over 650 wheelchairs all over Iraq, mostly pediatric wheelchairs from Reach Out and Care Wheels,” said Blauser. “If we can secure funding, we’re hoping to have the



National Metallic Industry and Bicycle Factory in Mahmudiyah manufacture wheelchairs there to help employ local Iraqis in making these for their own people."

The wheelchairs are sponsored by individuals who donate to the Wheelchairs for Iraqi Kids organization through their website www.wheelchairsforiraqikids.com. Blauser said any size donation is welcomed and will help to place disabled children into wheelchairs.

Families of the three children; aged 13 months, 10 years and 12 years old, came to the Civil-Military Operations Center requesting help and the Soldiers of CA Team 31 set up a date where the families and children could come to a secure, quiet location and receive the wheelchairs.

"Our mission is to help women and families and these wheelchairs offer the chance for a better quality of life for the disabled children in the Qada," said Mariam Youmara, an interpreter with Pro-

vincial Reconstruction Team 4 and a Women's Initiative advocate.

Haneen, a twelve-year old, whose tiny body was severely stiffened and twisted from a childhood illness, had a smile that lit the room. After the Soldiers settled her in the chair, and upon her first movement, her arms straightened out like wings, as if she was flying.

"It [distributing wheelchairs] brings such a sense of peace and calming," said SPC Keisha Barajas, of Portage, Ind., a civil affairs team specialist. "This is what this job is all about; it's what makes it all worthwhile."

"We [civil affairs] focus a lot on the bigger picture. It's great to have a chance to help individuals too, especially the kids," said SPC David Helfman, a civil affairs specialist from Coloma, Mich.

As she prepared to leave, the mother of Haneen, turned to the CA troops with tears in her eyes; saying the word that sums up the goal of every Soldier.

"Shukran—Thank you."



SPC David Helfman (left), of Coloma, Mich., and SPC Keisha Barajas, of Portage, Ind., both with Civil Affairs Team 31 of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, fit Ahmad into his pediatric wheelchair Feb. 7. Ahmad was one of three Iraqi children in Mahmudiyah to receive wheelchairs donated by Wheelchairs for Iraqi Kids. The Soldiers partnered with Brad Blauser, the founder of Wheelchairs for Iraqi Kids, to have the pediatric wheelchairs delivered to the children.

“Iron Brigade” Soldiers strive

By SGT

Daniel Nichols

For SGT Morales induction

Nine non-commissioned officers arrived at the headquarters of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, to compete for entry into the Sergeant Morales Club, Feb 22.

Soldiers from the Baumholder, Germany based unit competed for the prestigious club, which is the U.S. Army Europe's equivalent to the Audie Murphy club.

The Sergeant Morales Club members exemplify a special kind of leadership, characterized by a personal concern for the needs, training, development, and welfare of Soldiers. In the end, leadership is the primary focus of the Sergeant Morales Club.

“It's an elite organization of the most professional NCOs that exist in the Army today,” said MSG Melissa McFrazier, brigade operations, special projects NCO, 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., a native of Taunton, Mass.

The board is intense, and in the end only one NCO was selected as the best.

SSG Eugeniy Mikityuk, a section leader from “Ghost” Troop, 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment was the only NCO who made it through the rigorous board.

“I always encourage my Soldiers to exceed and always try to better themselves,” said Mikityuk, from Sacramento Calif. “In order for me to lead by example I believe I have to do the same thing, and I'm pretty happy I was selected. When I got back from the board my Soldiers asked if I made it and I was able to say ‘yeah I did,’” he said with a smile.

“To be selected you're basically in the top 1 percent of NCOs in the Army,” said MSG Michael Morton, NCOIC, Iraqi

Security Forces Cell, 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., a member of the Sergeant Morales Club board. “It's the Soldier that is be all, know all, do all.”

“As a club, we really strive to promote the non-commissioned officer corps and the professionalism of the non-commissioned officer corps.” McFrazier said. “To reach back and make sure we continue to mentor those NCOs and those Soldiers who are following behind us.”

The Sergeant Morales Club has existed since 1973 and is not a club with an easy entrance exam for non-commissioned officers.

Board members look for Soldiers that will go the extra mile for their troops; looking beyond problems to see solutions. They want to see if an NCO understands and applies both the letter and the spirit of standards and policies, Morton explained.

“If you can't think outside that box, and of all avenues to help that Soldier, then you're not fulfilling what we consider to be a Sergeant Morales member.”

The board itself lasted just under two hours for each NCO who went before the board; covering topics from troop leading procedures, Army programs, uniforms, and all points in between.

“I think the board members are a lot more selective over who they recommend into a Morales board,” said Mikityuk. “They put a little bit of pressure on you so that if you don't know the answer they'll just throw another one right after that; you're under pressure, you're in the hot seat.”

Although eight other Soldiers were turned away from acceptance into the club, just making it that far was an



achievement in its own right.

"You have to be hand selected, you have to be selected by your leadership, your first sergeant, your commander, battalion sergeant major, battalion commander, all the way up," said Morton.

"You really set yourself apart, first of all, even just by being recommended by your chain of command to appear before one of these boards," said McFrazier. "Then, if you are in fact selected, a lot of people strive for it and never make it, or are never recommended, (to be in the club) but you may have heard the quote that 'to whom much is given, much is expected.' So we want to make sure that NCOs who come before the board that they truly understand that it's not just a 'check the block', you don't just get recommended into the club and then their obligation is done."

The Sergeant Morales Club is not simply an organization with a difficult en-

trance exam. Its members constantly participate in various activities throughout the Army in Europe to support the Army community along with training other Soldiers. Sergeant Morales members organize study symposiums to help Soldiers prepare for boards, participate in programs that develop Soldiers professionally and personally, and look for opportunities to give back to their communities, said Morton.

"It's a service based organization, we give back to the community. We want to make sure we are viewed as professionals and that we continue that trend," said McFrazier.

Soldiers who are interested in joining the Sergeant Morales Club, despite the difficulties involved, are encouraged to do so.

"It's not unachievable, but it is difficult, and if it wasn't difficult it wouldn't be an elite organization."



Ssg Gustavo Padilla (left) talks with his sponsor, Ssg Kofi Kyereme, both from Task Force 4th Battalion 27th Field Artillery, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi National – Baghdad, before his appearance before the Sergeant Morales board at brigade headquarters, Feb 22.

ISF, MND-B soldiers provide Secure environment for march To Karbala



By SPC
Kevin Holden

Shia Muslims march through Lutifiyah, south of Baghdad, Feb. 12 during Arba'een, an Islamic religious holiday. This event begins in Baghdad and ends in the holy city of Karbala. Islamic followers perform this ritual as a sign of their faith for the sacrifices made by Imam Husayn in the Battle of Karbala in 680 A.D. MND-B Soldiers and their Iraqi Security Force partners patrolled the road ways and visited IA checkpoints in Lutifiyah during the holiday at the request of the Government of Iraq. The two forces set the conditions to allow Iraqis the freedom to take part in the Ashura and Arba'een pilgrimages and observances.

In support of the Security Agreement implementation, Multi-National Division—Baghdad Soldiers from 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment and their Iraqi Security partners conducted a combined operation in Lutifiyah, south of Baghdad, to provide a secure environment for Iraqis marching in the Islamic religious holiday of Arba'een Feb. 11 to Feb. 15.

The 1st Battalion, 25th Brigade, 17th Iraqi Army Division, Iraqi police, and National police provided the main security force while MND-B Soldiers provided assistance to ensure sectarian extremists did not attack the marchers on their way south to Karbala.

"The IA and MND-B Soldiers have worked together on security patrols and combined military operations every day

since the Security Agreement on Jan. 1,” said 1LT Jason Mittnight, a native of Tulsa Okla. “The ISF are well trained and capable of providing security for political and religious events. MND-B Soldiers will assist with security when requested by the (Government of Iraq).”

Arba’een is a time of mourning for Shia Muslims and participating in the pilgrimage reflects their Muslim faith in the Imam Husayn, the grandson of the prophet Muhammad. Husayn died in 680 A.D. in the Battle of Karbala. This Shia religious event has been banned in the recent past. Observing Arba’een in Iraq begins on foot in Baghdad and ends in the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala.

The pilgrimage from Baghdad to Karbala takes Muslim travelers through multiple cities. Lutifiyah was peaceful as crowds of people walked on the main southbound highway waving flags, playing music, and celebrating.

The MND-B Soldiers and their Iraqi Security Force partners patrolled the road ways and visited IA checkpoints in Lutifiyah during the holiday at the request of the Government of Iraq. The two forces set the conditions to allowed Iraqis the freedom to take part in the Ashura and Arbaeen pilgrimages and observances.

There were no reports of violence in their patrol areas.

“Shia Muslims feel safe, and there is freedom of religion to celebrate Ashura Arba’een,” said Iraqi Army 2LT Yasser H. Mohameed. “I am proud to serve the people and the new Government of Iraq.”



Shia Muslims celebrate Arba’een in Lutifiyah Feb. 12. The Iraqis marched on foot from Baghdad to the holy city of Karbala singing and waving religious flags. MND-B Soldiers and their Iraqi Security Force partners patrolled the road ways and visited IA checkpoints in Lutifiyah to set the conditions to allow Iraqis the freedom to take part in the Ashura and Arba’een marches and observances. There were no reports of violence in their patrol areas.

A soldier of the 17th IA Division provides security during the Arba’een march in Lutifiyah on Feb. 12. MND-B Soldiers and their Iraqi Security Force partners patrolled the road ways and visited IA checkpoints in Lutifiyah during the holiday at the request of the Government of Iraq.



Jurf Nadaf refurbished school

Opens for students

By SPC
Jamie Vernon

Members from the Jurf Nadaf community and Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 35th Armor Regiment, Multi-National Division—Baghdad met Feb. 12 for a ribbon cutting celebration at the Al Ghasacena Primary School to celebrate completion of a major refurbishment to the school.

Teachers and staff of the Al Ghasacena School held the celebration to emphasize the reconstruction gains in the area. The newly refurbished school provides an improved educational environment for children in the area. With funding from the Commander's Emergency Relief Program, the project included the addition of nine new classrooms and construction of a new restroom facility.

The ceremony included student performances and comments from Nahia Council members including Abdul Razzaq, Councilman and Education Committee Chairman for Jisr Diyala.

"Since the "Iron Knights" began their deployment in the Jisr Diyala Nahia in April 2008, they have worked hard to improve the quality of education received by the students in the area," said Abdul. "In Dr. Sameer, the Mada'in education representative, speaks during the ribbon cutting celebration at the Al Ghasacena Primary School in Jurf Nadaf West, celebrating the completion of major refurbishments to the school Feb. 12.



A girl's class performs a song in celebration at the ribbon cutting celebration for the Al Ghasacena Primary School in Jurf Nadaf West celebrating the completion of a major refurbishment to the school, Feb. 12. The newly refurbished school provides an improved educational environment for the children in the area.

total they have completed over 16 education projects at a cost of over \$2,500,000."

During the celebration students from each age group at the Al Ghasacena School performed short skits and dances.

"It is wonderful to receive appreciation from the populace for a job well done. This celebration was a very fun and entertaining gesture of that Iraqi appreciation," said CPT Andrew Besser, a native of Raleigh N.C., the civil military operations officer of Task Force 1-35 Armor.

The Al Ghasacena School located in Jurf Nadaf West, historically set on a sectarian fault line but now enjoys relative peace and cooperation.

"This project is successful because of the gains in security that have been accomplished over the past 6 months by [Coalition Forces] and the National Police," said Razzaq. "God willing, the peace will continue, we will continue to rebuild Iraq, and our children will enjoy a safe prosperous future."

Wheelchairs for

By PFC
Evan Loyd

Adwaniyah children

Soldiers from Multi-National Division—Baghdad and their Iraqi Army partners provided a life changing experience to Iraqi children with the delivery of over a dozen new wheelchairs in Adwaniyah Feb. 18.

As in many parts of Iraq, families simply can not afford wheelchairs. That's when Iraqi soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 55th Brigade, 17th IA Division took matters in their own hands and worked with soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, MND-B to acquire and deliver the wheel chairs.

Iraqi Army LTC Tahseen, commander, 2nd Bn., 55th IA Bde., saw the people of his area needed wheelchairs; providing them could be a good opportunity to show the local populace that the Iraqi Army cared about them.

"This is my third tour in Iraq, and

Iraqi Army LTC Tahseen (right), commander of the 2nd Battalion, 55th Brigade, 17th IA Division, and Saad Hamid Schnater, manager of the Adwaniyah Clinic, donate a wheelchair Feb. 18 to the family of a young girl with a nerve condition that makes walking painful. Soldiers from the Iron Brigade and their Iraqi partners in the 17th Iraqi Army Division provided a life changing experience to Iraqi children in the Mahmudiyah Qada.



LTC Tahseen (left), commander, 2nd Battalion, 55th Brigade, 17th IA Division and CPT Allan Carroll (right), of Kailua, Hawaii, commander, Company B, 1st Battalion, 35th Armor Regiment, meet outside the clinic in Adwaniyah, Feb. 18. Soldiers from the Iron Brigade and their 17th Iraqi Army Division partners provide a life changing experience to Iraqi children with the delivery of over a dozen new wheelchairs.

LTC Tahseen is one of the most competent Iraqi Army officers I have ever known. He unfailingly takes the initiative, and genuinely cares about the citizens of Iraq without regard to sectarian divisions," said CPT Allan Carroll, of Kailua, Hawaii, commander of Company B, 1st Battalion, 35th Armor Regiment. "This event is one more example of his commitment to the greater good of his country."

In his speech after the donation of the wheelchairs, Tahseen decided that this was a chance to show the citizens he doesn't take any sides based on religious background.

"I hope that you will take these wheel chairs in the spirit of service with which we give them. I would have the citizens of Adwaniyah know that regardless of background, be you Shi'a, Sunni, Kurd, or Christian, you are all citizens of Iraq, and my battalion will serve you and will defend you to our utmost ability."

“Modern Pioneer” Soldier Wins at battalion-level, Goes for brigade

By PFC
Evan Loyd

SPC Janet McMahon, from Sobus, N.Y., a lab technician in Company C, 47th Forward Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad, was recently selected as the 47th FSB Soldier of the Year and will soon compete in the “Iron Brigade’s” Soldier of the Year competition.

McMahon said she studied long and hard to win her company-level competition prior to competing for FSB’s Soldier of the Year.

After months of training, she stood in front of a board comprised of senior non-commissioned officers of the 47th FSB, answering a variety of questions focusing on Soldier skills to include: leadership, tactics, first aid, unit history, military justice, map orientation, physical training, battle focus training, and escalation of force.

“It took lots of studying to get to this level,” said McMahon. “It’s competitive and there is a lot to know.”

McMahon has been in the Army for over five years and assigned to the “Iron Brigade” since July 2007. McMahon joined the military to see the world and has enjoyed being stationed in Europe. She plans on training as a therapist for cancer patients after her Army enlistment ends.

She is currently on her first deployment and despite being trained as a lab technician, McMahon has performed numerous other jobs since she first deployed with the 2nd

SPC Janet McMahon (left), of Sobus, N.Y., a lab technician with the 47th Forward Support Battalion prepares to take blood for testing from SPC Amanda San Nicolas, of Mesa, Ariz., Feb. 24. McMahon won her battalion-level Soldier of the Year competition and will continue on to the “Iron Brigade’s” test of the best, Feb. 26-28.

BCT, 1st Armd. Div. to Iraq in April 2008.

“Since I’ve been here I’ve been the armorer, the commo (radio communications) representative, information management, a supply worker, mail room clerk; I even covered down on the orderly room,” said McMahon. “Actually, lab tech is my smallest area here because we have another lab tech and he does the lab work while I pretty much do everything else needed.”

Despite her hard work and determination, McMahon didn’t expect to beat out three other Soldiers’ and go this far in the Soldier of the Year. Her original intention for attending the Soldier of the Month boards was to practice for promotion boards.

If she wins the “Iron Brigade” Soldier of the Year competition, she’ll continue on the 1st Armored Division Soldier of the Year in Wiesbaden, Germany and then the United States Army Europe competition in Heidelberg, Germany.

“I think it would be awesome if I won,” said McMahon. “I can’t wait to see just how far I can go.”

The 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div. “Iron Brigade” Soldier of the Year competition begins at Camp Striker, Feb. 26 and runs through Feb. 28.



S1 Personnel

By SSQ Matthew Duncan
2BCT, 1AD S-1 NCO



Assignment Satisfaction Key

With the movement back to Baumholder, many Soldiers are eligible for re-assignments. In order for Soldiers to have a say in where they would like to go, the Army has come up with the ASK system which allows the soldier to give their input on their next duty assignment. To update your ask, the Soldier must log-in to their AKO and select the link for ASK. It is imperative that all Iron Brigade enlisted Soldiers update their assignment preferences and personal contact information using the Assignment Satisfaction Key (ASK) web application to give input on where they want to go next.

In order to update ASK, Soldiers can use their Army Knowledge Online (AKO) account password and gain access to their information. The ASK web application can also be accessed at <https://www.ask.army.mil/ask>.

The following information needs to be updated:

- a) Personal Contact Information: Current home address, phone number (home and duty), and email address (either home or military).
- b) Assignment Preferences: Soldiers must select 6 choices (3 CONUS and 3 OCONUS) from lists

provided. Two CONUS installations will be divisional installations.

c) Special Duty Interest Preferences: Drill Sergeant, Recruiting and/or Airborne. Soldiers are not volunteering for these duties.

d) Assignment Volunteers - Soldiers may volunteer for up to 3 CONUS and/or 3 OCONUS locations from lists provided.

e) Special Duty Interest Volunteers: Soldiers may volunteer for Drill Sergeants, Recruiting and/or Airborne.

Once the Soldier makes their selections, the Soldier will be notified via AKO email that their selections have been verified. US Army Human Resources Command (HRC) Enlisted Personnel Management Directorate (EPMD) assignment managers will use this information when considering you for assignments. Though updating your ASK will not guarantee you will go to one of your choices, but will allow you to have a say in your next assignment considerations.



Safety Bulletin

By Jerrold Scharninghausen



Accident Trends and Prevention

Accidents during deployments historically have two peak periods of occurrence, the first 90 days and the last 90 days. This trend is easily explainable. The first 90 days soldiers are unfamiliar with their new mission and environment. Accidents occur simply because they don't know any better. During the last 90 days accidents increase because soldiers stop paying attention and lose situational awareness. Thinking about home for example, distracts from the task at hand resulting in mistakes being made and short cuts being taken.

During the deployment we have had a total of 39 recordable accidents. These were accidents that require investigation paperwork to be submitted up through DA. These accidents comprised everything from fires to sports injuries and included both property damage and personal injuries. When you analyze only those accidents where soldiers were injured, there were 24 Personal Injury Accidents resulting in 119 days of hospitalized, 591 lost work days and 1036 limited duty days. While the number of recordable accidents have been relatively low for this environment, when you take into account the over 200 non-recordable accidents that required a TMC visit or the unknown number of accidents that were self treated, the potential for a serious mishap prior to TOA are high. The question then becomes how do we prevent it from occurring.

We have all been trained to watch out for the big hazards, but the little ones also have the potential to cause serious injuries.

If we look for examples outside the Brigade, one organization was concerned when its accident frequency showed a large increase over a three-month period. Supervisors / Leaders began an in-depth check of systems, equipment, and material that are considered to

be high-hazard such as heavy machinery, ventilation, toxic substances, machine guarding, etc. To everyone's surprise, none of these things were the cause of their accidents.

Chemicals were properly labeled and stored; machines were in good repair and properly guarded; the exhaust fans, sprinkler systems, respirators, etc., were all in good working order. Instead, accidents stemmed from a variety of "little things" that had been ignored until an injury occurred. For example, they found that serious falls had been caused by:

- A puddle of oil on the floor from a leaking forklift. No one had poured absorbent on the spill because it was "too small to worry about." It wasn't too small, however, to make a passing employee slip and fall when he didn't notice it.
- A box of supplies that had been left on the floor in front of a shelf, instead of properly stored. It had been walked around dozens of times before someone finally tripped over it.
- A ladder that was placed in front of an outward-opening door "just for a minute" to change a light bulb. It was knocked over by the opening of the door, and both the worker on the ladder were injured.

All these "accidents waiting to happen" had been ignored because they didn't really seem *that* dangerous to the personnel involved. We often intend to submit a work order for a defective tool, extension cord, or stepladder but don't take the time, or forget about. It is important to follow through on our good intentions, since these are just the sort of "little things" that can result in a serious injury. Little things *do* count and if we take a few minutes to pay attention to all the potential hazards around us we can prevent serious injuries from happening and get home safely.

Chaplain's Corner

By CHAP (MAJ) NANA BASSAW
2nd BCT Chaplain



Called to Serve the Present Age

"Duty Is Ours, Results are God's."

-John Quincy Adams

In reflecting on the above quote by John Quincy Adams, I am drawn to our Battle Rhythm as we make redeployment preparation. In spite of our hustle and bustle, one thing becomes clear...we are called to serve the present age. William Barclay reminds us that the greatest joy comes from taking pride in the little things we are called upon to do daily. He writes that one of the happiest men he ever met was a person whose job six days a week was nothing fancier than to wash dirty cars. However, he washed them with "such thoroughness and such pride that you could run your hand along the inside of the mudguard on the wing and withdraw it spotless." His gift, evidently, was that of washing cars.

What is needed in the world then is not necessary those who do extraordinary things, but rather those who can do ordinary things extraordinarily well. Therefore

whatever job we find ourselves doing, it must leave a positive mark on a person or in our surroundings. Recognizing that all of us have gifts, our duty then is to use these gifts, whether it is a gift that the whole world can see or a gift that blooms, without fanfare.

Jesus summarized it so well..."You have been faithful over a few things; I will make you master over many" (Matthew 25:21-23). May it be said of us that when we were needed, we responded to the call to serve the present age.



Striker Justice

By SPC Efran Leal
2nd BCT Task Force Paralegal Specialist



Rights Warning Procedure

You do not have to answer my questions or say anything. Anything you say or do can be used against you in a criminal trial. You have the right to talk privately to a lawyer before, during, and after questioning and to have a lawyer present with you during questioning. This lawyer can be a civilian you arrange at no expense to the Government or a military lawyer detailed for you at no expense or both. Do you understand if you are now willing to discuss the offense(s) under investigation, with or without a lawyer present, you have a right to stop answering questions at any time, or speak privately with a lawyer before answering further, even if you sign a waiver certificate?

We have all seen this in movies and television shows, but we as leaders rarely use this when questioning our Soldiers in regards to possible misconduct involvement. When we do this not only are we violating the rights of our Soldiers, but we are making it difficult, or impossible, to pursue nonjudicial or judicial punishment

on the offenders. The accused can be notified of their rights verbally if time is limited, but nothing is more concrete than the use of DA Form 3881. It is recommended for the Chain of Command to always fill out a Rights Warning Procedure/Waiver Certificate when questioning individuals you may suspect of misconduct, due to the fact if you choose to question a Soldier without first advising him/her of their rights then all information and 'evidence' gathered is inadmissible in a criminal trial, Article 15, or court-martial proceeding. Rule of Thumb: If the statement you intend to ask ends in a question mark, you must advise the suspected Soldier of their rights.

Point of contact for more information on rights advisement is SGT Jesse Saenz at the 2d Brigade Legal Section.



Doctor's Desk

By CPT (Dr.) Joseph May, MD
2nd BCT Surgeon



In this ongoing series, Doctor's Desk is introducing members of our 2BCT Medical Team to let them present to you why it is that they chose their profession in medicine. This edition features MAJ Felix Oduwa, MD, who is the Battalion Surgeon for TF 1-35. He is trained as a Family Physician, and spends his time at COP Cashe South.

Why did you become a Family Physician?

"I am a Family Physician. As far back as I can remember, I always wanted to become a doctor; although I did not really know what type of doctor I wanted to be. The things I knew for sure were:

- 1) I wanted to take care of people and help relieve their pain,
- 2) 2) Medicine is a challenging, respectable and honorable profession,
- 3) 3) being a doctor presents an opportunity for lifelong learning.
- 4) 4) As a doctor, I can get a job anywhere in the world.
- 5) 5) I can be my own boss."

"My path to Family Medicine however, was not a straight one. Family practice is a primary care specialty that emphasizes comprehensive and ongoing care of the patient and the family. Primary care was not traditionally big in the medical school I attended. Like most medical schools at the time, Boston University School of Medicine was geared towards specialty medicine. In other words, most students were steered towards specialty medicine instead of primary care. Primary care was not "cool". Most of the professors and thus mentors were specialists and not primary care physicians."

"When I graduated in 1996, primary care was becoming the "in thing". In fact, I

think that was the year Boston University finally got a big grant to expand its primary care department. I still did not know too much about primary care at that time. I chose to do Ob/Gyn because it offered the chance to do medicine and surgery. However, during my residency in Ob/Gyn, I was not happy. I thought it was too restricted and I did not really like the operating room. I thought the specialty was too mechanical and stressful. It also did not offer the type of lifestyle I wanted to lead. When I looked at my attending physicians, they were often stressed, workaholics, and deathly afraid of lawsuits. They spent most of their time in the hospitals and were not at home very much. Although I loved the science and practice of Ob/Gyn, the specialty itself did not fit my personality or life's plan. In my second year, I resigned the Residency and became a General Medical Officer (GMO)."

"My GMO years afforded me the opportunity to do primary care and work with a lot of Family Physicians. Their confidence when it came to the practice of medicine and caring for the whole patient and the family was very attractive to me. At that point, I fell in love with Family Medicine. I really enjoyed the relationship I developed with the patients. Not only did I feel they were "my responsibility," the patients appreciated me. I also felt like a "real doctor", able to take care of almost



Doctor's Desk

By CPT (Dr.) Joseph May, MD
2nd BCT Surgeon



everything. The relationship Family Physicians cultivate with their patients are life-long. I loved the fact that Family Medicine is not limited by age, sex, organ system or disease process. I like being the first and last line of defense. I like being there in the beginning, the middle and the end. I see Family Practice as the patient's home base. They may see other physicians when needed, but they always come home. I like being there when others have given up. There is nothing more satisfying than the trust between a doctor and his patients."

What educational pathway did you take to become a Family Physician?

"To become a family Physician, one first has to complete 4 years of college, 4 years of medical school and 3 years of Residency training. In Medical school, you learn about medicine. Residency is where you learn how to be a 'Doctor'."

"Family Medicine Residency encompass training in various aspects of medicine, including but not limited to Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Obstetrics, Gynecology, Orthopedics, Dermatology, Surgery and Behavioral Medicine. The Family Physician also learns to perform various procedures such as circumcisions, vasectomies, flexible sigmoidoscopies, colposcopies, minor orthopedic procedures and various dermatologic procedures."

What's different about Family Medicine in the Army from what your civilian counterparts do?

"The job of Family Physicians in the military is very similar to those of the civilian Family Physicians. However, due to the mission of the military and the transient nature of the military members, the Army Family Physi-

cians often do not have a chance to develop long term relationships with most patients. In my opinion, Army Family Physicians do get more training and experience in trauma management and leadership than our civilian counterparts. In addition, Family Physicians in the Army are offered the opportunities to become Flight Surgeons, receive extra training in tropical medicine, preventive medicine and clinical pharmacology. The Army also offers the Family Physicians fellowships in Geriatric Medicine, Sports Medicine and faculty development. Civilian Family Practice programs offer fellowships in advanced Obstetrics training, Rural Medicine, and Adolescent Medicine."

What's the most exciting part about your job?

"I love being a Family Physician! There are so many exciting part of family medicine. To me, the most satisfying aspect of Family Medicine is the broadness. One minute, I may be dealing with someone who is having chest pain, the next minute I may have to deliver a baby, take care of the athlete with knee pain or the elderly man with diabetes, and so on. Every day is exciting as a Family Practice doctor. It is never boring. However, the best part is the privilege to care for my patients, not only during times of illness, but also in helping them stay healthy by proactively promoting wellness, healthy lifestyles, immunizations and medical screenings. I think my job is to keep my patients out of the Emergency Rooms. I still enjoy continuing relationship even from former patients I have not seen in years. In fact, a lot of my patients still write and update me on their lives and send pictures of the children I delivered. This makes it all worth it."



STRIKER TORCH

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articles, comic strips or artwork, and photographs. Please email articles in Microsoft Word and send photos as JPEGs (Please do not send photos embedded in PowerPoint and Word). The editors reserve the right to edit content or shorten all submissions for space requirements.

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